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Letter dated 29 December 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith a statement from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine in connection with the repressions against the citizens of Ukraine by the Russian Federation (see annex).

I would appreciate your assistance in having the present letter distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 68 (c), and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Volodymyr **Yelchenko**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 29 December 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine in connection with the repressions against the citizens of Ukraine by the Russian Federation

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine expresses its resolute protest to the Russian Federation in connection with the ongoing repressions, illegal detentions, searches, arrests, torture and ill-treatment towards the citizens of Ukraine.

Despite the repeated calls by Ukraine and the international community demanding the immediate release of the illegally detained and sentenced Ukrainians, the Russian leadership continues its shameful practice of using Ukrainians as hostages of its aggressive policy against our country.

Cynical disregard of fundamental human rights and freedoms have transformed law enforcement and the judicial system of the aggressor state into repressive and punitive tools that foster the formation of the totalitarian regime in Russia.

The aggressor state continues to ignore its obligations under the Minsk agreements on the exchange of hostages and illegally detained persons under the principle of "all for all". Although six prisoners have returned to Ukraine, the total number has not decreased but increased. We now have information that at least 17 Ukrainians are being kept under politically motivated reasons in the territory of the occupier. Even more of our compatriots are arbitrarily arrested and detained in the occupied Crimean peninsula. More than 100 Ukrainians are being kept in appalling conditions by the Russian terrorist forces in the occupied Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine.

Russia continues the practice of systematic unmotivated rejections of appeals of Ukrainian consuls to grant them permits to visit the Ukrainian political prisoners. There is unequivocal evidence of the systematic implementation of unlawful interrogation practices, torture and methods of psychological pressure towards the citizens of Ukraine held in Russia and the occupied territories.

The situation with respect to the citizens of Ukraine who were fraudulently involved in the illegal schemes of distribution of drugs in the Russian Federation has recently worsened. Such schemes have resulted in the de facto recruitment and involvement of our citizens in illegal activities in the territory of the Russian Federation. In 2016 alone nearly 1,000 of our compatriots were sentenced in Russia for drug trafficking-related crimes, with most of the cases based on fabricated materials.

Deliberately harmful actions of the Kremlin towards Ukraine and its citizens have become so unpredictable and threatening that Ukraine had to warn its citizens not to travel to the Russian Federation or to the temporarily Russian-occupied Ukrainian territories.

Ukraine, along with its international partners, is making all possible political, diplomatic and legal efforts to free Ukrainian citizens from Russian captivity. However, in breach of the norms of international law, Moscow continues to hold in captivity Oleg Sentsov, Olexander Kolchenko, Akhtem Chiyhoz, Roman Sushchenko, Mykola Karpyuk, Ferat Sayfullayev, Serhyi Lytvynov, Olexii Cherniy, Ruslan Zeytullayev, Stanislav Klyh, Valentin Vyhivskyi, Yuri Primov, Victor Shur, Olexander Kostenko, Evhen Panov, Rustem Vaitov, Enver Bekirov, Emir-Usain Kuku, Vadim Siruk, Muslim Aliev, Refat Alimov, Enver Mamutov, Arsen Dzhepparov, Ramzy Memetov, Mustafa Dehermendzhy, Zevri Abseyitov, Rustem Abiltarov, Ali Asanov, Andriy Kolomyets, Volodymyr Balukh, Teymur Abdullayev, Uzayir Abdullayev, Aider Saledinov, Volodymyr Prysych, Olexii Shtyblikov, Olexii Besarab, Vladimir Dudko, Olexiy Stogniy, Glib Shabliy, Leonid Parkhomenko, Redvan Suleymanov, Emil Dzhemadenov, Rustam Ismailov, Mykola Shyptur and many other Ukrainians. Another two citizens of Ukraine, Ilmi Umerov and Mykola Semena, although not in prison now, continue to be targets of harassment by the Russian occupation authorities.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine demands that the Russian Federation release immediately all illegally detained citizens of Ukraine without any additional preconditions and stop the practice of political persecution and repressions towards our citizens.

We call upon the States Members of the United Nations to take further consolidated steps to increase pressure on the Russian Federation on the grounds of its severe violations of the key provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the European Convention on Human Rights, the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and other fundamental international instruments and its disregard for the requirements of General Assembly resolution 71/205, entitled "Situation of human rights in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol (Ukraine)".